



Town of Coulee Dam
Green Oasis at the Foot of Grand Coulee Dam

Minutes
1299th Regular Council Meeting
June 14, 2017

6:00 p.m. Regular Council Meeting

Mayor Wilder called the 1299th regular meeting of the Coulee Dam Town Council to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Council members present: David Schmidt, Gayle Swagerty, Duane Johnson (joining at 6:05pm), Ben Alling and Keith St. Jeor.

Staff Present: Public Works Superintendent Mike Steffens, Clerk/Treasurer Stefani Bowden, Attorney Mick Howe.

Pledge of Allegiance

Gayle Swagerty led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Input

Fred Netzel attempted to begin discussion regarding the town to city classification change.

Mayor Wilder asked that he hold his comments and questions until the topic is discussed during Action Agenda item 6.a.

Ed Bartley, in regards to the recent release of the Consumer Confidence Report, asked if the drinking water has been tested for metals. He is concerned with the media reports that have been released relating to the chemicals from Cominco contaminating the Columbia River. High levels of metals have been found in fish and warnings have been released to not consume large amounts of the river fish. Mayor, with concurrence from the Public Works Superintendent, stated that the water has been tested for metals. The Town has not been required to report the testing results annually for metals. The next testing for copper is scheduled for July 2017. Mayor told Bartley that the information can and will be provided to him. One citizen spoke up stating that he had taken a water sample to a testing lab in Spokane not too long ago and was told that it was very clean and there is no need to filter it.

Agenda updates & modifications

None

Consent Agenda

David Schmidt moved with Keith St. Jeor seconding to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

Minutes Regular Council Meeting – May 10, 2017

Vouchers: Claim Vouchers and Checks:
Claim Voucher No.'s 36625 through 36642 and EFT's dated May 24, 2017 in the total amount of \$104,413.78

Claim Voucher No.'s 36652 through 36692 and EFT's dated June 14, 2017 in the total amount of \$75,352.85

Claim Voucher No. 36624 dated May 15, 2017 in the total amount of \$52,271.12 and EFT dated May 15, 2017 in the amount of \$18.00

Payroll Checks: Payroll Check No.'s 36643 through 36651 direct deposits and EFT's dated May 15 and 31, 2017 in the total amount of \$86,897.97

Bank Fees: May 2017 Bank and Invoice Cloud service fees

Action Agenda

A. AB 2017-013, Resolution No. 2016-06, Classification Change

Mayor Wilder gave a brief overview of what the difference between a Town and a non-charter Code City are and then turned the discussion over to Town Attorney Mick Howe to lead. Howe explained the differences and stated that the State RCW sets what each classification is allowed to do. Originally, cities were classified based on population. That changed when small towns requested to have more flexibility and led to Legislature allowing small towns to re-classify as "code cities" as prescribed in RCW 35A. Many surrounding small towns have already made the change to code cities and are very happy they did. Howe suggested checking with some of those cities and ask how the change has benefitted them. He has only heard of positive outcomes. The Resolution being presented here is just to initiate the process. There is a minimum of a 90 day period to review, take public comments/input, ask questions, etc. Public Hearing are required and will be held prior to the passage of an Ordinance.

A citizen asked if other towns have made the change by means of a public vote. Mr. Howe responded with "no, all have followed the same process as being presented".

Mayor Wilder asked, in keeping organization to the discussion, that the council have opportunity to discuss the topic before any citizen comments are received. Changing from a "town" to a "city" doesn't mean we have to change how we identify ourselves. We can still be called "Town of Coulee Dam" even if we change to a code city, just as "Elmer City" is actually a town.

Councilman Duane Johnson has some concerns and would like to know what public support/concerns are before he would support passing the Resolution. Mayor noted that a "city" may have more freedom with grants, etc.

Attorney Mick Howe stated with the idea of potentially having a Fiber Utility in the future, the "Town" could not do it but a "City" could.

Citizen Bonnie Femling asked if it would impact future consolidation with neighboring towns and cities. Howe said it would not change from how it is now. RCW states that you have to be contiguous to each other to consolidate. Coulee Dam and Grand Coulee are divided by USBR land.

Councilman Ben Alling asked if it would prohibit a city official from holding another town position, such as being a member of the Fire Department or member of Tree Board for example. Howe replied saying it is no different than what is currently allowed.

Councilman Keith St. Jeor has concerns over governing body structure and would like to keep the structure the same as it currently is. St. Jeor wanted to remind the council and citizens of his commitment to do what the people of the town want. He has no personal agenda. He has been hearing from the town people that the lack of good high speed internet is a huge issue. People are leaving Coulee Dam and moving to other area towns with better service. Technology is what is leading our society. He feels that more people would stay in Coulee Dam if the Technology were better. Right now, the "town" has no authority to make any improvements to internet/fiber whereas maybe that would be an option if we were a "city".

Councilwoman Gayle Swagerty began with "it is good that people came to hear this discussion. Change sometimes seems scary, but this isn't much of a change". She feels that the 90 days is a good amount of time for the public input process.

Councilmember David Schmidt is in favor of beginning the process of changing the classification. He feels we are lacking in high speed internet and modern services. We might be surprised as what opportunities this could create.

Citizen Fred Netzel handed out a set of questions for the council to review regarding the classification change. He asked if the town council could choose to put it out to a citizen vote. Mayor and attorney both commented that it is not a citizen vote the way it is presented. There are ways to put it out for vote which would require a Special Election through the county which could be quite lengthy and costly. Mayor did ask the county as to what the cost may be. They could not provide an accurate amount but said it would

likely be between \$3000 and \$7000. Howe stated it would be an entirely different process than what is currently being presented.

Citizen Larry Price wants the citizens to vote and not let it be a council decision.

Citizen Dan Netto asked if the town has researched the process and expense of operating a fiber system. Mayor said at this point nothing has been done regarding that because it isn't even an option being a town. A city would have that option. Councilman Schmidt explained it would just give us the opportunity to provide a service, not saying that we ARE doing it.

Councilman Alling would like to consider tabling the resolution and find out what citizens really want before obligating to the expense of a vote.

Citizen Larry Curtis feels that the elected officials were elected to make decisions and they are doing a good job with it. Opportunity is being provided for the citizens to have input.

Councilman Johnson wants to keep same form of government and doesn't feel the Town can afford the expense of a special election.

Attorney Mick Howe reminded everyone that the proposed change would keep the exact same form of government that the town currently has. Classification to a city would not change that.

David Schmidt moved with Duane Johnson seconding to pass the noncharter code city action and authorize the Mayor to sign Resolution No. 2017-06 with changing the word "shall" to "may" in Section 4 and acknowledges that a second action will be required to adopt the Ordinance 90 days later. Motion carried

Councilmembers St. Jeor and Alling encouraged citizens to stay involved throughout the process so that concerns can be addressed.

B. AB 2017-014, New Fire Department Membership

Gayle Swagerty moved and David Schmidt seconded to approve Fire Department Membership for Richard Coffey. Motion carried.

Citizen Bonnie Femling asked if there is a requirement that Fire Department Members live in or own property in Coulee Dam. Clerk stated it is not currently a requirement.

Discussion Agenda

A. TIB Grant Street Project

Mayor informed the council that the TIB project for the streets around the school is going to bid in a couple of weeks. The Town has the opportunity to take advantage of using the engineers and contractors while they are on the project to complete some sidewalk improvements which will be more cost effective.

B. WWTP

Bid Award has been made and negotiations are still taking place regarding additional USDA Rural Development grant funding. Discussions are also taking place regarding vacation of rights-of-ways.

Staff, Council & Committee Report

Mayor

Councilmembers

David Schmidt notified the Mayor and council that the application for the restoration of the boiler building into a restroom has been withdrawn. The project ranked low on the funding list. Mayor stated that the council does need to consider making improvements to the old boiler building in order to preserve it.

Gayle Swagerty has been working with Lon Ottenson from the USBR regarding weed issues and stated that good communication is happening. Ownership of property around the sand pile is an ongoing mystery.

Swagerty has spoken with Gregg Dohrn of EWU in regards to completing the parks element of the Comp Plan. The previous student that had started the project is no longer involved but Dohrn thinks he has a good replacement.

Swagerty said that a clean-up plan for Fiddle Creek is being developed.

Keith St. Jeor asked Swagerty who she found that could identify the property ownership around the sand pile. She has been speaking with Dan from National Park Service and Lon from USBR. The ownership issue goes back and forth between NPS and USBR. Nobody can determine for sure. Citizen Quincy Snow said that in the past the USBR took ownership responsibility and had water meters installed. "If they didn't own it, why did that have meters put in?" Swagerty said that the NPS had the meters removed because it became too costly when the town raised rates a few years ago.

Duane Johnson noted that tree branches are blocking several street lights making it very dark to walk at night. He asked the Public Works Superintendent if the limbs could be trimmed. More light would be nice. Swagerty mentioned that it would be a good idea to mention this issue when working with the planner to develop a street tree maintenance plan.

Duane Johnson reported on attending the most recent Okanogan Council of Governments (OCOG) meeting and asked for Mayor's assistance and attendance at an upcoming meeting.

Clerk

The 2016 Annual Financial Report has been filed with the State Auditor

The Casino requested to close a section of Birch Street, in front of 516 Birch, on June 17th between the hours of 8:30pm and 11:30pm for the purpose of a Corvette car group visiting from Omak. The Casino will provide security. Clerk has checked with the R&A Café to ensure the closure would not cause any issues with their business. Public Works Superintendant and Police Chief have no objections. Citizen Bonnie Femling asked if the council is aware that there is a car show happening at North Dam Park that same day. Mayor and Clerk both stated neither one is a town sponsored event. The town has no involvement with it. It is just simply a street closure request.

The new phone system has been installed in Town Hall and Police Department, which was part of the insurance claim from the water damages.

Police

Mayor Wilder informed the council that the new police officer will be graduating the academy next week and will soon be back and working in the Town of Coulee Dam.

Announcements

Clerk announced that she will be gone for the following week and a half and notified the council that she will not be in attendance at the June 28th Council Meeting.

Executive Session

None

Public Input

None

Adjournment

Councilmember Duane Johnson motioned with Gayle Swagerty seconding to adjourn Council Meeting #1299 at 7:48p.m. Motion carried.

Mayor

F. Gregory Wilder

Clerk

Stefani Bowden